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Princeton President William Bowen has a novel and refreshing answer to a question that troubles a number of his peers today: How do you handle a bunch of alumni and students who are actively criticizing what is going on at the school? When a group called Concerned Alumni of Princeton wrote to alumni to express its critical views, President Bowen wrote as well, giving his side of the story.

The Princeton encounter started last fall when CAP chairman David Condit wrote an appeal for alumni money to help Princeton, arguing that the university could best be helped through a donation to CAP. In a letter dated Dec. 5 sent to many alumni, President Bowen delivered his answer. What emerges, in effect, is a tale of two Princetons: One is the Princeton President Bowen is shaping, and the other is the Princeton Mr. Condit and CAP would like to see instead.

**Full Text** (469 words)*Copyright Dow Jones & Company Inc Jan 17, 1985*

Princeton President William Bowen has a novel and refreshing answer to a question that troubles a number of his peers today: How do you handle a bunch of alumni and students who are actively criticizing what is going on at the school? When a group called Concerned Alumni of Princeton wrote to alumni to express its critical views, President Bowen wrote as well, giving his side of the story.

Other schools facing dissident journals similar to CAP's Prospect have dealt with the recrudescence of campus conservatism less cordially. Yale, for example, continues to press its lawsuit against Yale Lit, saying that the "Yale name" is in danger if the publication continues to use it. All too often on American campuses, academics themselves are willing to abridge academic freedom if the ideas being expressed are contrary to what they regard as prevailing community standards.

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Princeton, arguing that the university could best be helped through a donation to CAP. In a letter dated Dec. 5 sent to many alumni, President Bowen delivered his answer. What emerges, in effect, is a tale of two Princetons: One is the Princeton President Bowen is shaping, and the other is the Princeton Mr. Condit and CAP would like to see instead.

Mr. Condit, for example, argues that Princeton's traditional eating clubs ought to be preserved in their present, independent form. President Bowen, by contrast, believes the clubs should be radically changed: perhaps turned into de facto dormitories, or forced to become co-educational.

Mr. Condit claims that last year 31 out of 33 pregnant students had abortions after receiving counseling from Princeton's sex clinic. President Bowen, on the other hand, argues that Princeton's program is "thoroughly professional and humane" and says that Mr. Condit's comments are "callous."

President Bowen has commented that "You could say it's a whole new school." Mr. Condit and CAP, it appears, would like to see the social mores, curriculum and institutions of Princeton maintained essentially as they were when Bill Bradley or even F. Scott Fitzgerald went there. Probably few people would agree entirely with either one side or the other.

But President Bowen displays a regard for the best in academic traditions by being willing to compete openly and on the merits of his arguments for the support of the university's alumni. Quite possibly F. Scott Fitzgerald would have sided with Mr. Condit, but he would have admired President Bowen for confronting the opposition straightforwardly.

It has always seemed to us that a university, above all else, should be a place where conventional thought is challenged and minds are stretched in free and open debate. President Bowen, in his willingness to engage his critics, sets a good example for his peers.

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